

Public Library Core Services

Introduction to Public Library Work
UPLIFT –Orientation for New Directors
Pat Montgomery June 2004

Library Administration is about fulfilling the mission of the library. The mission of a public library is to offer materials and services that provide for the enlightenment of the library's actual and potential customers, as rapidly and efficiently as possible. The Library Director works with the Board of Trustees to set policies, establish budget priorities, plan and evaluate services. The administration team sets short-range as well as long-range goals. The library director hires and inspires staff and serves as the chief technical adviser on all library operations.

Collection Development, also known as collection management, involves the identification, selection, acquisition, and evaluation of a collection of library resources (e.g., print materials, audiovisual materials, electronic resources) for a community of users. Selection is at the heart of the collection development process. Skill, knowledge, and the right tools are required to select appropriate library materials that meet the needs of the community.

Reference, the heart of library public service, is defined as meeting the information and reading needs of people of all ages who live in the community. It is the entire process of finding out what people need, using library resources to meet the need, and then making sure that the patron's question is answered completely. The public library is the only place in a community where any resident can go with any kind of information request. It is the responsibility of the library staff to assure that all who do contact the library are made to feel welcome and at ease.

Cataloging and classification together are the basis for organizing materials and improving accessibility. Librarians have the responsibility to create catalog records that answer questions about the authorship, subject, and location of library materials. Cataloging is a procedure designed to describe an item with details such as title, author, publisher, date, physical description, subject headings, and edition. Classification is the process of assigning a number to an item so that it can be shelved or grouped together with related or similar items.